Induction of AJT

5108. SHRI AIMADDUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the frequency of MIG crashes has established the need for early induction of an Advanced Jet Trainer (AJT); and

(b) if so, what steps have been and are being taken for expediting acquisition of an AJT and at what stage the acquisition process stands at present?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) There is no relationship between MIG crashes and induction of an Advanced Jet Trainer. The major causes of accidents are human error, technical defect and bird hit. The Indian Air Force has identified the requirement of an Advanced Jet Trainer for safe and smooth transition of young trainee pilots to high performance/ technology aircraft in front line Squadrons. Various options for acquisition of an AJT are under examination by the Government. No time limit can be laid down for such a major acquisition.

Missing MIG 21 Aircraft

5109. SHRI LAJPAT RAI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an Indian Air Force MiG-21 aircraft went missing after taking off from Tejpur Air Base on 20 April, 2002;

(b) if so, whether its wreckage was not found even after 10 days;

(c) whether India has sought Bhutan's assistance in locating its wreckage in Bhutan;

(d) the number of persons at the time of flight in the aircraft; and

(e) the other details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Two.